SPRING 2025

Alumni Columns

Northwestern State University Magazine

GREETINGS

***James T. Genovese** (1971)*
President
Northwestern State University

Dear Alumni,

The first thing I want to share with you is some good news: applications for the fall are up, graduate numbers are up, enrollment for summer classes is up, Freshmen Connection numbers are up, housing applications are up and our incoming students have, on average, higher ACT scores and higher GPAs than we have seen in recent years.

A few weeks ago, NSU hosted a forum on artificial intelligence that explored the intersection of artificial intelligence, leadership and technological advancements. This provided an opportunity to honor the contributions of the late Lola Dunahoe. An endowment made by the Dunahoe family in her memory will honor her legacy by ensuring that Northwestern continues to draw outstanding scholars and innovators to inspire future generations.

One thing I've noticed while working on a college campus is the energy that young people have. There is always something going on. There is a lot of positive momentum at Northwestern. Remember, word of mouth is still the most effective way to communicate our message. Please continue to support NSU!

Jill Bankston (1997)
Director
Alumni & Development

Dear Alumni,

Demons are on the road!

In case you haven't heard, the Office of Alumni and Development and our friends in Athletics are currently visiting cities across Louisiana and Texas. It's been heart-warming to see so many supporters as we welcome new faces, announce scholarships and hand out door prizes. I'm grateful to every one of you who has attended one of our events, brought a friend and shared your memories.

Our *On the Road* tour will conclude Friday, May 9 at the Natchitoches Jazz/R&B Festival on the downtown riverbank, so if you are looking for a reason to visit Natchitoches, mark your calendars now.

You can sign up with this QR code or by visiting: **www.northwesternstatealumni.com/demons-on-the-road/**.

It's always a good time to become a member of the Alumni Association, renew your membership, update your information or refer a student you'd like us to visit with. We are here to help!

We hope to see you soon and as always,
Fork 'Em, Demons!

Read the Columns online by scanning this QR code.

www.northwesternstatealumni.com

Alumni Columns
Official Publication of
Northwestern State University
Natchitoches, Louisiana
Organized in 1884
A member of CASE
Volume XXXVII Number 1 SPRING 2025
The Alumni Columns (USPS 015480) is published by Northwestern State University, Natchitoches, Louisiana, 71497-0002

ALUMNI OFFICE
520 University Parkway • Natchitoches, LA 71457
318-357-4241 • bankstonj@nsula.edu • www.nsula.edu

NSU ALUMNI OFFICERS

President.....Leah Sherman Middlebrook, Bossier City, 1986, 2016
1st Vice President.....Scott Repp, McKinney, Texas, 1988
2nd Vice President .....Virginia Montcerey, New Roads, 2001
Secretary.....Camille Nunez, Slidell, 2001
Treasurer.....Kimberly Martin, Houston, 1988
Past President .....Patricia Hrapmann, New Orleans, 1973, 1978

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

NSU President..... James T. Genovese, 1971
Executive Vice President/
Chief of Staff.....Dr. William Drake Owens, 2004, 2005

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Pam Young Bison.....Many, 1980
Steven Celestine. .....Shreveport, 1989
Tommy Chester .....Natchitoches, 1969
Monty Chicola.....Alexandria, 1979
Shade Dufrene.....Savannah, Texas, 1999, 2003
Allen Evans.....Shreveport, 1989
John Evans .....Natchitoches, 1992
Angelique Duhon Freel.....Baton Rouge, 2000
Rocky Gandy.....Houston, 1981
Emilyn Horton.....Natchitoches, 1987, 1993, 2001
Lynn Kees .....Coppell, Texas, 1983
Jeremy LaCombe. .....New Roads, 1999
Lane Luckie.....Tyler, Texas, 2008
Waylon Metoyer.....Pflugerville, Texas, 2008
Mandi Mueller ..... New Orleans, 2009
Camille Nunez.....Slidell, 2001
Emilie King Parker .....Shreveport, 2017
Joe Robertson..... DeQuincy, 1990
Laura Seabaugh.....Shreveport, 1991
Joe Sers.....Natchitoches, 1975
Mark Spikes.....League City, Texas, 1991
Joseph B. Stamey.....Natchitoches, 1983
Crystal Hemphill Stewart.....Natchitoches, 1997, 2003
Toni Stroud .....Natchitoches, 1989
Glenn Talbert.....Shreveport, 1964
Jim Villard .....Alexandria, 1983
Leighann Westfall.....Baton Rouge, 2017

EMERITUS BOARD MEMBERS

Jerry Brungart..... Natchitoches, 1969, 1971
Leonard Endris (deceased)..... Leesville, 1974
Dr. Hayward Hargrove..... Black Mountain, N.C., 1964
Patty Hrapmann.....New Orleans, 1973, 1978
Gail Metoyer Jones..... Natchez 1981, 1998

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

SGA President .....Madysen Morgan, Bossier City

ALUMNI COLUMNS STAFF

Publisher/Executive Director of
Economic Development & Advancement..... Laurie Morrow
Editor..... Leah Pilcher Jackson, 1994, 2011
Contributors.....David West
Jason Pugh
Photography ..... Chris Reich, 2007, 2009
Amy Lee, 2019
Cree Roark Gentry, 2022
Design/Layout .....Daphne Hines, 1982, 1984

Northwestern State University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges to award associate, baccalaureate, master's, specialist's, and doctorate degrees. Contact the Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, Georgia 30033-4097 or call 404-679-4500 for questions about the accreditation of Northwestern State University.

Northwestern State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, genetic information, age, pregnancy or parenting status, and veteran or retirement status in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Complaints or inquiries related to Title IX should be directed to the Director of Student Advocacy and Title IX Coordinator, Julie Powell (318-357-5570). For Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) concerns, contact the Accessibility and Disability Support Director, Crissey Smith, at 318-357-5460. Additionally, Northwestern complies with the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy & Campus Crime Statistics Act. Information about NSU's campus security and crime statistics can be found at https://www.nsula.edu/universityaffairs/police/. Full disclosure statement: https://www.nsula.edu/iehr/.

LITERARY RALLY at 100

The 100th Northwest District Literary Rally took place March 15 with 34 high schools attending. The event was first organized in 1925. Academic proctors and staff administered 2,093 tests to 2,009 registered students. The annual event featured 15 academic departments providing hands-on experiential sessions for students, while staff members from Academics, Testing, Counseling Services, Career Services, Student Engagement, IT, Recruiting, Health Services, and Student Media volunteered throughout the event. The collaborative effort across departments and divisions ensured a smooth and productive experience for all participants.

Dr. Yonna Pasch serves as the Northwest District Rally coordinator, assisted by committee member Star Hamous, Peyton Romero, Emily Miller and Rebecca Boone. Pictured on the cover are student volunteers Hannah Kennedy of DeRidder, Shelby Deason of Pitkin, Thomas Perryman of Shreveport and Lynsey Plunkett of Benton.

Golden Jubilee honoring Class of 1975 May 14

Northwestern State will welcome the return of the Class of 1975 during the class's Golden Jubilee Celebration May 14-15. The celebration will include the presentation of 50-year diplomas, campus tours and a lunch to honor the class and graduates from previous years.

Check-in will begin 4 p.m. Wednesday, May 14 where class members will receive name tags, followed by campus tours with NSU recruiters until 6 p.m. The Golden Jubilee pre-party will be from 6-8 p.m.

Check-in for Thursday, May 15 will begin at 8 a.m. in the President's Room of the Sylvan Friedman Student Union. Class members will dress in caps and gowns to attend 10 a.m. commencement ceremonies in Prather Coliseum, followed by a luncheon honoring the class of 1975 and 50+ graduates at 1 p.m. in the Lucile M. Hendrick Room on the first floor of the Student Union.

Dismissal will be after final remarks at 3:30 p.m.

Ticket are $80 per graduate and $65 per additional guest(s).

Tickets can be purchased by visiting www.northwesternstatealumni.com/golden-jubilee/.

This public document was published at a total cost of $19,180.76. 56,414 copies of this public document were published in this first printing at a cost of $19,180.76. The total cost of all printings of this document, including reprints is $19,180.76. This document was published by Northwestern State University Office of University Advancement and printed by Progress Printing Plus, 2677 Waterlick Road, Lynchburg, Virginia 24502 to foster and promote the mutually beneficial relationship between Northwestern State University and its alumni, supporters and community partners. This material was printed in accordance with standards for printing by state agencies established pursuant to R.S. 43.31. Printing of this material was purchased in accordance with the provisions of Title 43 of the Louisiana Revised Statues.

Economic Development and University Advancement seeks to grow partnerships and regional workforce development

Northwestern State University is working to drive economic growth and empower corporate and community partnerships by harnessing the resources, expertise and innovation of the institution by creating a new Office of Economic Development and University Advancement.

The new office combines Northwestern's longstanding efforts to promote economic development in north and central Louisiana with the university's alumni outreach, private fundraising and the new Innovation Park, which is being developed in partnership with the Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts.

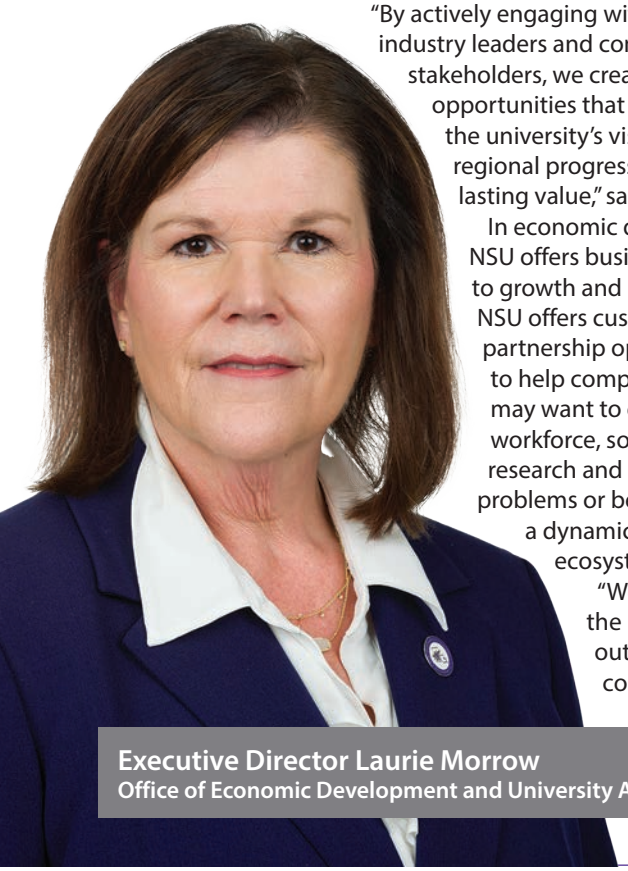
Executive Director Laurie Morrow said NSU is committed to building strategic alliances that fuel workforce development, inspire innovation and enhance economic resilience.

"By actively engaging with businesses, industry leaders and community stakeholders, we create opportunities that align with the university's vision, foster regional progress and deliver lasting value," said Morrow.

In economic development, NSU offers businesses a path to growth and innovation. NSU offers customized partnership opportunities to help companies that may want to enhance their workforce, solve critical research and development problems or become part of a dynamic innovation ecosystem.

"We believe that the most impactful outcomes come from the collaboration between industry and academia," said Morrow. "By partnering with us, you are not only advancing your company's growth but also helping shape the future of education and innovation. Each industry partnership with NSU is tailored to provide significant value. We offer annual partner plans designed around your company's needs, allowing for flexibility and effective engagement."

According to Morrow, businesses can benefit through visibility on campus and beyond, collaborative opportunities for industry solutions by working with Northwestern faculty and students, access to promising talent in NSU's student body and a variety of ways to enhance NSU through donations and sponsorships.



Executive Director Laurie Morrow
Office of Economic Development and University Advancement

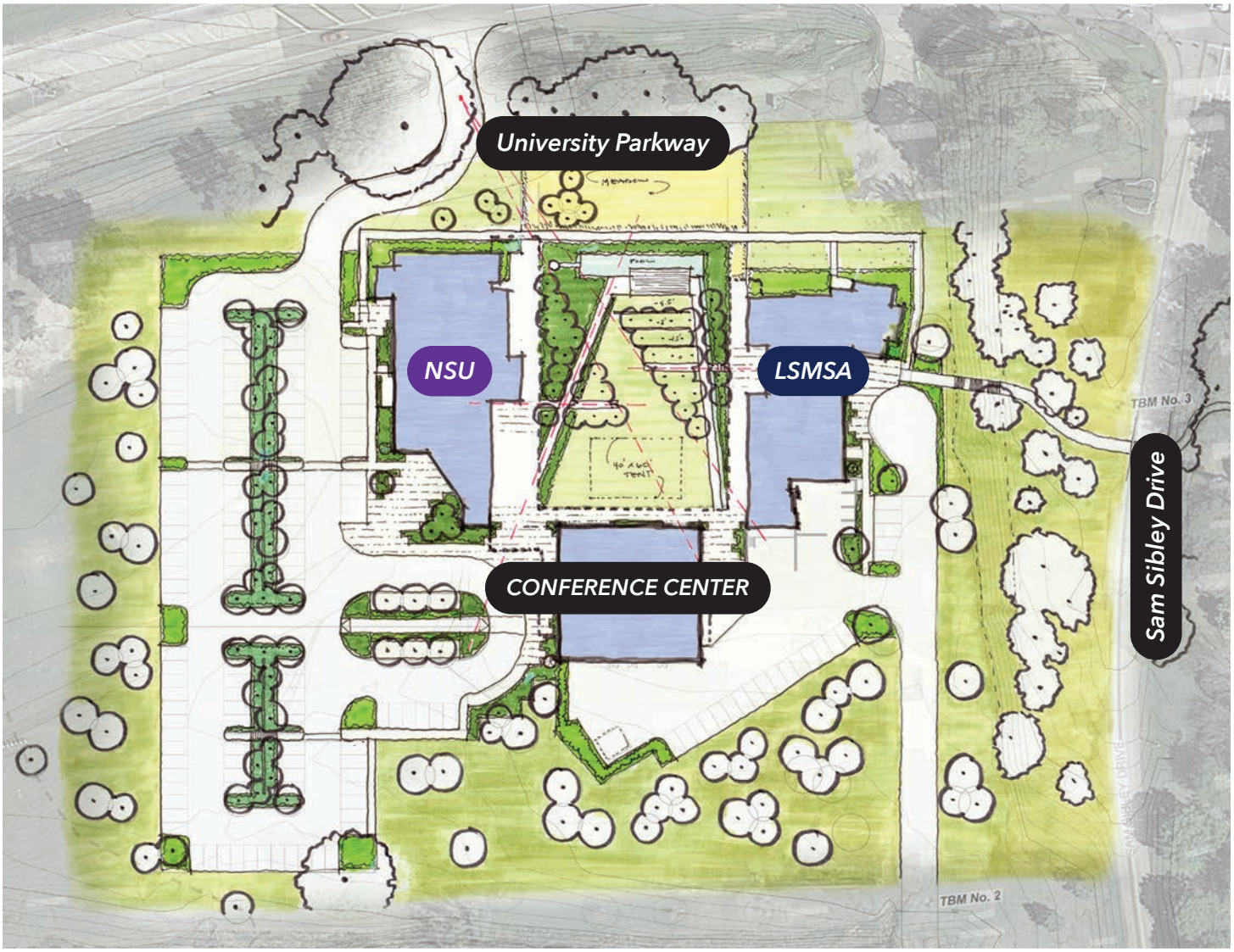
The 29,800-square-foot Innovation Park will serve as the gateway to Natchitoches for travelers from I-49, marking the entrance to the revitalized Campus Edge District along University Parkway. This district will offer retail, dining and entertainment for students, visitors and locals.

Innovation Park will be located on a 12+ acre site fronting University Parkway and is immediately adjacent to NSU and LSMSA. It will provide a 10,450-square-foot The New Family Makerspace, an 11,350-square-foot Business Development Center and an 8,000-square-foot Conference Center. These buildings will be connected by covered outdoor space fronting an outdoor events lawn and small amphitheater. Appropriate support facilities, including offices and outdoor workspaces, will be included for both institutions.

Morrow said Innovation Park will "cultivate a vibrant ecosystem for entrepreneurial endeavors, artificial intelligence research and community engagement, bringing together students, businesses and residents in a collaborative space that will enrich 'hands-on' and 'real-life' educational experiences for students from both institutions, as well as provide co-working collaboration spaces for local business start-ups and entrepreneurial programs."

The $18 million project is being funded with a combination of federal, state and private funding.

Morrow is also now administrator to the Office of Alumni and Development and the NSU Foundation, a role that facilitates networking and communication between alumni, business and industry and other stakeholders.



Innovation Park will be located on a 12+ acre site fronting University Parkway and is immediately adjacent to NSU and LSMSA. It will provide a 10,450-square-foot The New Family Makerspace, an 11,350-square-foot Business Development Center and an 8,000-square-foot Conference Center. These buildings will be connected by covered outdoor space fronting an outdoor events lawn and small amphitheater. Appropriate support facilities, including offices and outdoor workspaces will be included for both institutions.

The NSU Foundation serves the students, faculty and staff of Northwestern primarily through financial resources it raises and distributes.

The Foundation manages various programs, including scholarships, professorships and chair funds, fundraising and development operations, college and departmental support and other university-related programs. The Foundation also bridges relationships with faculty, students, alumni, friends, corporations and other foundations interested in academic excellence. In recent years, the Foundation has established new fundraising records along with endowment returns and growth.

The Foundation functions through its Board of Directors, institutional constituents and donors. The NSU Board of Directors is a voluntary group of business and professional leaders that govern the NSU Foundation, meeting four times per year and working on several committees.

For more information on NSU's Office of Economic Development and University Advancement, go to www.nsula.edu/edio.

Former Demon tennis student-athlete Judit Castillo Gargallo led a lesson in pickleball for Shannon Wall-Hale's psychology class at NSU. On the front row from left are Wall-Hale, Castillo Gargallo, Kiara Davis, Skyla Johnson and Jasmine Scott. On the back row are NSU President James Genovese, Elayna Gardiner, Shanice Hutson, Jessika Duplantis, Paige Lindsey and Ja'Kaiya Scott.

Former Lady Demon athlete inspires with message of positivity

Delivering an uplifting message about positivity, advancing towards personal goals and the importance of a supportive community, Judit Castillo Gargallo, professional pickleball player and former Lady Demon tennis player, took time to visit her alma mater to teach pickleball to a Psychology 3200 class.

"People help you stay positive," Castillo said. "It takes a lot of work to talk positively to yourself when things aren't going well. We have to believe in something greater than ourselves."

Castillo Gargallo is a top-ranked player who has won four gold, three silver and 10 bronze medals competing all over the U.S. with Major League Pickleball (MLP).

Growing up in Teruel, Spain, she started playing tennis at age 12. At 17, she arrived at Northwestern State with a tennis scholarship, and earned a bachelor's degree in Health and Exercise Science in 2020 and a master's degree in Health and Human Performance with a concentration in sports administration in 2022. After graduation she worked as a tennis pro and trainer at country clubs in Shreveport. There she was introduced to pickleball and quickly took to the sport. She won her first tournament the day after her first practice. She decided to turn pro in 2023. With success came sponsors and last fall she moved from Shreveport to Dallas and continues to travel around the U.S. to compete.

Pickleball, a hybrid of tennis, badminton and ping pong, is the fastest-growing sport in the U.S. and possibly the globe. It's a game that is accessible to all ages, played with paddles on a small court. Castillo said that as pickleball grows globally, the sport's professional organizations plan to make game rules unified internationally in the hopes pickleball will be part of the 2032 Olympic Games.

Castillo is currently signed with the SoCal Hard Eights, a professional team based out of southern California. She is ranked in the top 10 and #1 Spain and Europe rankings. After her visit to Natchitoches this spring, she was headed to the Cayman Islands and the APP Fort Lauderdale Open, followed by the first MLP this year in Orlando.

"She has come to present and teach pickleball to my Positive Psychology class the last two semesters giving back to her Demon family," said Shannon Wall-Hale, instructor of the Positive Psychology class that focuses on positivity, introspection and mindfulness. "It's such a positive and uplifting thing she does. She is always

Cooper earns first win in Pro Tour Championship Round thriller

Justin Cooper got just what he needed to win his first tournament on the Bass Pro Tour. Cooper, a 2017 NSU graduate and former member of the fishing team, brought in a 1-pound, 10-ounce largemouth with just over a minute remaining in the tournament to capture a $150,000 first prize.

"It's indescribable," Cooper told Bass Pro Tour. "I never thought that I could win one. I've always been a bridesmaid and never a bride. I just never thought it was in the cards for me to win a big event like that. I thought I could have a good, solid career but always missed that part. So, to get that win and have my family here, it means everything."

Before making the Bass Pro Tour in 2023, Cooper placed second in the 2021 Tackle Warehouse Pro Circuit Rookie of the Year race. He finished in the Top 20 for Angler of the Year all three years he fished the Pro Circuit/Invitationals, including three Tops 10s in 2021.

Cooper majored in pre-med at Northwestern but chose to become a professional angler. He owns a guiding business on Toledo Bend fishing for crappie and bass. He also has an outfitting business hunting whitetail deer and exotics.

Justin Cooper, right, marked his first Bass Pro Tour win with his wife Anna and their daughter Stormi. *Photo by Phoenix Moore*

> *"I never thought that I could win one. I've always been a bridesmaid and never a bride... to get that win and have my family here, it means everything."*
>
> – JUSTIN COOPER (2017)

Former Lady Demon cont.

seeing NSU and Natchitoches as her family."

While on campus, Castillo talked tennis and volleyed a round of pickleball with NSU President James Genovese, also a former Demon tennis player. She has stayed in touch with the NSU community because of its people and has presented clinics for area youth.

"People who support you in your goals are going to help you go places," she said. "The higher we go the more positive we have to stay. It takes being able to have people by your side, keeping your feet in the game and also advancing your dreams."

Follow stats and information on Castillo Gargallo at https://www.majorleaguepickleball.net/player/judit-castillo-gargallo/ and https://juditcastillo.com/.

McDermott, Allen honored with title of professor emeritus

The Department of Music at NSU has bestowed the title of professor emeritus on retired faculty members Dr. Dennette McDermott and Dr. Burt Allen.

The title of emeritus is reserved to honor, in retirement, faculty and administrators who have made distinguished professional contributions and have served significant portions of their careers at the institution.

"Dr. McDermott and Dr. Allen have had an incredible impact on the Department of Music at NSU, both during their tenure and in their continued service after retirement," Dr. Terrie Sanders, head of the Department of Music at Northwestern. "Their dedication, expertise and ongoing commitment truly embody the spirit of a professor emeritus. It is inspiring to see them recognized for their contributions to Northwestern in this way. "

McDermott retired after 32 years serving as professor of flute and coordinator of graduate studies at Northwestern. Her passion for research inspired her uncle to create the Donald F. Derby Endowed Professorship for the music and art areas at NSU in 1996.

"I am truly honored to represent the music area in the School of Creative and Performing Arts, with the title of professor emeritus," said McDermott. "When I began teaching at NSU in 1990 I imagined the potential for growth that was here at Northwestern. I dedicated my entire academic career in order to educate and train music students to earn degrees and go out into the world and share their knowledge and passion for music with others.

"My curiosity for music has never left me and my service as graduate coordinator was quite meaningful. NSU has been a place where my love of performing was able to be combined with research and as a result, I am a lifelong learner."

Allen served as director of choral activities and professor of music at NSU for 32 years. He was also coordinator and head of the Department of Music. Allen was named to the CAPA Hall of Fame in 2019.

"I consider being named professor emeritus to be a true honor," said Allen. "To me it demonstrates a respect and appreciation for my efforts and accomplishments during my tenure at NSU. I am grateful to the students, my colleagues, alumni and administrators for this honor."

McDermott holds music degrees from Michigan State University (BM), the University of Michigan (MM), and the University of North Texas (DMA).

McDermott spent many years playing in regional orchestras such as the Shreveport Symphony, also performing solo and chamber recitals funded by research grants in the U.S. and Europe. Her fascination for Czech music began with her dissertation topic on Jindřich Feld, which led to teaching at the Janacek Academy of Music on a faculty exchange in fall of 1995.

A passion for 18th-century music, and the love of Czech composer Jiri Čart's music, inspired her to learn to play a historical baroque flute. In 2015, she attended the Tafelmusik Summer Institute, Twin Cities Baroque Course, American Bach Soloists and the Berwick Academy, all of which allowed her to learn from some of the world's most respected baroque musicians and scholars. McDermott has performed with the Austin Baroque Orchestra and has presented many solo and chamber recitals at other universities on baroque flute sharing her knowledge and research. Last year, she was selected to present a lecture recital at the National Flute Association convention in San Antonio.

She authored the article on Čart (Czart/Zarth) in the Grove Music Online in 2021. McDermott edited and published many of the composer's works, placed manuscripts on IMSLP and has identified some of his works in European libraries, such as the Royal Danish Library. In 2021. McDermott recorded an album with Douglas Bakenhus, Leighann Ragusa and David Schrader, "Jiri Czart, Flute Sonatas, released in 2023," which is online and free funded by the Magale Endowed Professorship at NSU. Her most recent research can be read in the Professional Journal of The National Flute Association in the Winter issue of the Flutist Quarterly "Rediscovering Jiri Čart (Czart/Zarth)."

Allen served as director of choral activities and professor of music at Northwestern from 1983-2015. Allen built a strong and responsive choral area that grew from 40 students to more than 150. His work with the choral program was an important part of the overall growth in the School of Creative and Performing Arts as it achieved a national reputation. Allen led the department through National Association of Schools of Music re-accreditation. The choral rehearsal room at NSU was recently named in his honor.

Dr. Burt Allen and Dr. Dennette McDermott were honored during a March 19 symphony concert.

Allen was the first Northwestern faculty member to appear in Carnegie Hall, and the NSU Chamber Choir under his direction is the only Northwestern ensemble to appear there in a solo performance.

Allen was invited to conduct choirs in Canada and Japan and was the first to lead a Northwestern musical ensemble on a European tour. He was selected as one of 15 conductors from a national pool to take part in a seminar with Robert Shaw on score preparation and conducting Mendelssohn's "Elijah" at Emory University. Allen was an adjudicator for contests and festivals in Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Missouri, Michigan, Illinois, and Kansas.

Allen was the first CAPA faculty member to successfully author an externally funded grant, followed by several others, totaling more than $350,000 which created the first music computer labs, purchased several Yamaha Disklavier pianos and funded a group piano lab and multimedia capabilities for several classrooms. He started the local tradition of performing the Candlelight Service of Lessons and Carols in Natchitoches. Allen was artistic director for the Red River Chorale in Alexandria from 2008-2020.

PEOPLE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT...

CALVIN CUPP *WICHITA, KANSAS - 1991*

Calvin Cupp

As the 50th anniversary of Shocker Rowing at Wichita State university approaches in April, Calvin Cupp (1991), has been busy preparing for a big celebration. Cupp, director of Boats and Bikes and head rowing coach, is in his 25th year at WSU.

A native of Bernice, he was a founding member and competitor for NSU's rowing team from 1988-1991 and part of the first graduating class of the Louisiana Scholars' College. His coaching career began in 1992 at Louisiana State University, before he returned to NSU and coached rowing until taking the job in Wichita in 1999.

Calvin's dream of a permanent home for Shocker Rowing became a reality in 2018 with the opening of River Vista Boathouse on the west bank of the Arkansas River in downtown Wichita. This milestone was achieved through Calvin's determination and collaboration with the city of Wichita, university administration and local community leaders.

"The boathouse project is something that I am especially proud of and it provides our student-athletes with a wonderful quality of experience," he said. "During my time I have also been selected several times as the Plains Region ACRA Coach of the year and spent time as the regions elected representative to the national ACRA board, where I also served on the eligibility committee."

Calvin says his passion for rowing is deeply rooted in his care for students.

"Being part of WSU rowing means joining a family of like-minded enthusiastic individuals," he said.

"It is exciting to see the investments that so many are making in the long-term success of NSU with new endowments. They are so critical to ensuring the future the university and the programs within it," he said. "We are making the same push with our program here and focusing on how to ensure the next 50 years. I established our first program endowment years ago and we are still working to grow our three current ones and create new ones."

Last year, Cupp was a Bender or Twigs inductee, an honor Wichita State bestows to employees of 25 years.

Calvin and his wife, the former Christi Cloutier (1990) have two adult children, Ellen and Nolan. In addition to spending time with family and volunteering with Shocker Rowing, he collects comic books, enjoys movie nights with his family and has restored a 1969 Chevrolet C-10 pickup truck.

"It has been a wonderful adventure, and I have been blessed to be able to work with students all these years, while also striving to make a positive impact on our local community," he said.

You can follow Calvin and WSU rowing on social media at:
Twitter: twitter.com/ShockerRowing
Facebook (Rowing): www.facebook.com/WSUCrew/
Facebook (Boats & Bikes): www.facebook.com/BoatsandBikesRiverVista/

JERROLD MCRAE *FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA - 2002*

Jerrold McRae and Family

The Columns staff heard from Jerrold McRae, a 2002 graduate.

McRae was a member of the men's basketball team that made the Demons' first-ever appearance in the NCAA Tournament in 2001. He was an active student and a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

"These experiences were incredibly formative for me, shaping both my personal and professional life," he said. Since graduating, he has built a career in healthcare, joining Pfizer nearly two decades ago. He currently serves as vice president of sales for the company's dermatology division. Throughout his tenure at Pfizer, he has been instrumental in shaping commercial strategies

"Despite living in Florida, I continue to bleed purple and follow NSU's successes from afar with great pride."

McRae was a four-year letterman and a key member of the men's basketball team from 1998 to 2002. As team captain, he played a pivotal role in the historic 2001 season. Reflecting on that experience, he credits it with shaping his perspective on leadership and the dynamics of high-performing teams. McRae was also named an honorary captain of the 2000's All-Decade Team.

Beyond his professional and athletic achievements, McRae is deeply committed to his community and professional networks. He is still a proud member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, having joined through NSU's Theta Lambda Chapter. He is also actively involved in the National Sales Network and supports various local nonprofits.

McRae lives in Fort Lauderdale with his wife, Farron, and their two children, Christian (8) and Parker (6).

Legendary Peabody Coach Charles Smith gets Nth Degree

Peabody Magnet boys basketball coach and math teacher Charles Smith (holding award) was joined by, from left, retired Northwestern State basketball coach Mike McConathy, NSU President James Genovese and Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame chairman Doug Ireland at a pregame ceremony Jan. 3.

Peabody Magnet's boys basketball team scored a signature win Jan. 3 in front of a jammed gymnasium, outlasting Alexandria Senior High 65-55 in a matchup of two of Cenla's strongest teams.

It was also a showcase in a pregame ceremony as NSU President James Genovese presented the university's prestigious Nth Degree to Peabody coach Charles Smith, who decades before earned a master's degree in education from Northwestern.

Smith, 75, was inducted in the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame last October in Springfield, Mass., the greatest honor issued for worldwide participants in the sport. He is the fifth-winningest coach in the history of high school basketball.

The Nth Degree is a special honor conferred by Northwestern since the 1960s that recognizes individuals who have gone the extra mile in meritorious service to the university or the community.

Smith's Nth Degree not only resulted from his basketball success, but for his educational impact on generations of students at Peabody and in Rapides Parish, and for his strongly positive community influence.

In his remarks to the crowd, Genovese pointed out that Smith's induction in the Naismith Basketball Hall officially confirmed his status in the history of the game and put him in a peer group of coaches including UCLA's John Wooden, Georgetown's John Thompson, North Carolina State's Jim Valvano and other iconic figures in basketball through the 130-year history of the sport.

"It's my honor to present Coach Smith with this award because he represents the best of us, and inspires all of us," said Genovese. "We are proud he is an alumnus of Northwestern and we are thankful he has served his community, Peabody High School and the entire state humbly and with great distinction during more than 50 years in education."

Coach Smith has been a role model to thousands of Peabody students, and 80-plus basketball scholarship recipients, with his former players including an executive vice president of a Fortune 500 company, pilots, doctors, attorneys, engineers, business owners, educators, coaches and two NBA players.

He came to Peabody in 1974 as a math teacher – and remains in that role. He was an assistant coach, helping the Warhorses win the first state title in school history, before taking over the head coaching role in 1984. He earned his undergraduate degree from Paul Quinn University and after beginning his teaching and coaching career, completed his master's at Northwestern.

Scanning the list of previous Basketball Hall inductees are superstars like Shaquille O'Neal, Bill Russell, Pete Maravich, Julius Erving, Michael Jordan, Cheryl Miller, Anne Meyers, Bob Cousy, Karl Malone and Bob Pettit – not to mention the game's greatest coaches from all levels, like Red Auerbach, Henry Iba, Pat Summit, Kim Mulkey, Leon Barmore, Lenny Wilkins, Morgan Wooten and Adolph Rupp along with Thompson, Wooden and Valvano.

Among those joining Smith in the Basketball Hall's 2024 induction class were Vince Carter and another Louisiana Sports Hall of Famer, Baton Rouge native and LSU great Seimone Augustus.

His induction in Springfield came in Smith's first year of consideration. As a high school basketball coach, he was chosen from a subset that previously had only four representatives among the 450 people enshrined since 1959. Smith has won 86 percent of his games, losing only 215.

Such is his stature that the gymnasium at Peabody now carries his name – Charles Smith's Emerald Palace.

NTH DEGREE

Gates pays tribute to late wife through psychology scholarship

Dr. Donald Gates, retired head of Northwestern State University's Department of Psychology, has created an endowed scholarship through the NSU Foundation. The Donald and Lenda Gates Scholarship will benefit students majoring in psychology and is Gates' most recent tribute to his wife, who passed away in 2004.

Gates has written and spoken frequently about Lenda, their courtship and happy 46-year marriage. A contribution to First Baptist Church in her name funded the three large crosses constructed behind the church last year that are visible from many parts of Natchitoches.

"We each contributed to the marriage and when she passed away, it was devastating to me," he said. "She was a wonderful, wonderful person. She did so much to help me become the man I am, a better person, a better father and actually a better teacher also. She was always there."

Don and Lenda Gates

Gates grew up in Mississippi, went to work after high school to support his sister and widowed mother and was drafted into the U.S. Army two years later. His interest in psychology originated with an experience working at a military prison stockade at Fort Sam Houston.

"My captain told me he didn't want the job to be punishment, he wanted it to be rehab, so he gave me the responsibility of setting up a rehab program for the prisoners," Gates said. "I got a library started. I got a basketball court. I had a preacher come in and hold religious services on Sunday and several other things. My interaction with the prisoners gave me the desire to work with people, trying to help them in some way."

Shortly after discharge from the Army, Gates met Lenda at church in Jackson, Mississippi. He was 23; she was 18.

"We just hit it off in the very beginning and we got closer and closer," he recalled. "She graduated high school and went to Mississippi College for Women and she was so unhappy. She finished her first year, came home and we got married and transferred to Southern Mississippi." Their wedding was in September 1958.

Using the GI Bill, Gates earned undergraduate, graduate and doctoral degrees while teaching at Southern Miss and Lenda earned a degree in home economics. Their daughter Ginger was born in 1959 and their son Greg in 1963. The family arrived in Natchitoches in 1964 when Dr. Gates joined the NSU faculty.

"We came to this small town with a hard to pronounce name with great expectations," he said, remembering the course load he was assigned as a new assistant professor. "I loved teaching and interacting with the students. Our intent when I took the NSU position was to stay a couple of years and move on to bigger and better things, but we fell in love with this little town with the funny name."

In 1970, Gates was offered the position of department head, which reduced the teaching that he loved for more administrative duties. He was able to establish a master's degree in psychology, but budget constraints were a constant struggle. To establish a lab for behavioral studies, he organized a series of workshops with noted psychologists from various fields of study that quickly grew and generated significant funds for the department. The classes he did continue to teach provided opportunities to create engaging student interaction, rather than straight lectures, to increase student participation. He retired in 1988.

Lenda taught a short time in NSU's home economics department, but the majority of her career was teaching gifted classes at the Natchitoches 9th Grade Center where she arranged trips for students to visit historic sites in Washington, D.C.; Philadelphia, Amish country and other places.

"She was not just an outstanding wife, but an outstanding teacher," he said.

In 2003, Lenda was diagnosed with Amyloidosis, a rare and incurable disease that occurs with a protein called amyloid builds up in organs. She lost her battle with the disease in 2004.

"Even at the final stages of the disease, this wonderful lady was worried about her family. I can't recount the many times she asked me if I was okay. That was Lenda, the family matriarch to the end."

The Gates children, Ginger and Greg, both attended NSU Lab schools as youngsters. Ginger Gates followed in her father's footsteps earning master's and Ph.D. degrees at Southern Miss. Greg Gates is a senior account executive for ABC Companies in Texas.

Gates, who will be 92 in July, enjoys reflecting on memories and authored a book called "Precious Memories: Stories from the Heart." He said he will leave selection of the scholarship recipients up to the department head but hopes they will benefit a student who intends to pursue advanced degree in psychology.

Friends who wish to contribute to the scholarship can do so by visiting www.northwesternstatealumni.com/gates-scholarship/.

Information on NSU's Department of Psychology and Addiction Studies is available at www.nsula.edu/psychology/.

Bernard Scholarship reflects commitment to Natchitoches and NSU

Louie Bernard, a devoted Northwestern State University supporter and respected public servant, established the Louie Bernard Family Endowed Scholarship through the NSU Foundation that will be matched by the Board of Regents.

The scholarship will be awarded to any major with preference given to students from Natchitoches, Sabine, Winn and Red River parishes, the areas that Bernard represented in the Louisiana State Senate from 2020-2024.

The match for the scholarship is a result of funding targeted towards enhancing mental health services, awareness and outreach initiatives if they meet criteria set forth by the Board of Regents in partnership with the Louisiana Department of Health. The match brings the endowment to $200,000.

A lifelong resident of Natchitoches, Bernard graduated from Natchitoches High School in 1969 and earned a degree in political science and history from Northwestern State in 1973. His career began with the Natchitoches Parish Police Jury where he worked 16 years as purchasing agent, assistant secretary-treasurer and then as administrator. He was Clerk of Court for Natchitoches Parish from 1991-2016 and was involved in many civic, professional and philanthropic organizations through the years. He was inducted into NSU's Alumni Hall of Distinction, the Long Purple Line in 2023.

During his tenure as senator, Bernard served as vice chair of the Senate Insurance Committee among other assignments. He worked with other lawmakers to secure funding for Northwestern that resulted in a big project currently underway: the construction of Alost Hall to replace Kyser Hall as the main academic building. It was for years one of the biggest needs on NSU's campus.

Louie Bernard was a 2023 inductee into NSU's Long Purple Line. He was congratulated by then president Marcus Jones.

"It's what I'm most proud of, although I'm certainly not the only one involved. It was a team effort," he said. "I'm so proud for what it'll do in the future for Northwestern. That's going to be a big draw."

The Bernard's association with Northwestern began in 1934 when Louie's mother, Jessie Jones Bernard, arrived at Louisiana State Normal College, as NSU was then known.

"She was one of seven children and she came on that long lonely bus ride up here with her saxophone and she played in the band," Bernard said. She met Henry Bernard, who was landscaping the campus at the time and responsible for planting the large pine trees along Sam Sibley Drive near Chaplin's Lake. They were married in 1940, and had seven children, Henry Jr., Kayla, Mary, Louie, Scriven, Emma and Don.

"Mama and Daddy had a dream. It was that all seven kids would graduate from college," Bernard said. All of them did. Six of the seven graduated from Northwestern, as did many of their children. Bernard and his wife Gayle were high school sweethearts and married in 1974, the year after they graduated from Northwestern.

These days, Bernard spends time with his grandchildren and continues

Louie Bernard

to be active, serving as this year's Rotary Club president, chairman of the board of First United Methodist Church and on the NSU Foundation board.

"I do love to be around people. I don't know how people sit home. 'Why did you go to that festival out there?' Well, I didn't go for politics. I went because I know so many people and it's good to see them again. It's amazing how many of your friends aren't here anymore."

To the Bernard family, Northwestern still feels like home.

"There's just a hominess to Northwestern. It's not so big, you don't just get lost. Everybody is somebody. They know you when you walk in the door," Bernard said. "I remember when I was a senior, I had so many classmates that couldn't wait to get out of Natchitoches but I never wanted to leave Natchitoches. I hoped and prayed I'd be able to find something that would let me stay in Natchitoches and I've been blessed by that. I've been able to work as administrator with the Police Jury and then decided to run for Clerk of Court, then ran for the Senate. I've had a good a good run and I'm appreciative of that."

Friends can contribute to the scholarship by visiting www.northwesternstatealumni.com/bernard-scholarship/.

For information on supporting scholarships through the NSU Foundation, contact Cristy Bernard, assistant director of Donor Relations, at bernardc@nsula.edu or (318) 357-4292.

Dunahoe family establishes endowed chair in interdisciplinary studies

The Lola Walker Dunahoe Endowed Chair in Interdisciplinary Studies has been established by her family at Northwestern State, honoring her lifelong commitment to education, philanthropy and service.

Through the Dunahoe family's generosity, $600,000 in private contributions is eligible for $400,000 in matching funds from the Louisiana Board of Regents Support Fund. Upon approval of the application for matching funds submitted to the University of Louisiana System and Louisiana Board of Regents, a permanent $1 million endowment will be created to support the endowed chair.

Earnings from the endowment will be used to attract distinguished scholars to the university, further enhancing NSU's academic excellence and impact.

"Lola Dunahoe dedicated her life to service, education and the betterment of her alma mater and community," said NSU President James Genovese. "Her impact on Northwestern and the Natchitoches community is immeasurable. This endowed chair will ensure that her passion for scholarship and academic excellence continues to shape the future of our students and faculty."

The establishment of the Lola Walker Dunahoe Endowed Chair in Interdisciplinary Studies is a testament to Dunahoe's extraordinary legacy. A native of Baton Rouge, she moved to Natchitoches in her junior high school years and graduated with honors from Natchitoches High School in 1968. She went on to earn dual bachelor's degrees in mathematics education and biology, both with honors, from Northwestern State University in 1971.

While her early career was spent teaching mathematics at Istrouma Junior High School in Baton Rouge and later at Natchitoches Central High School, Dunahoe's passion for education extended far beyond the classroom. She dedicated her life to advancing educational opportunities, preserving local history and serving her community through leadership roles in numerous organizations.

Dunahoe had a far-reaching impact at Northwestern, including her service as president of the NSU Foundation, where she led the university's first capital campaign, surpassing its $18.84 million goal by raising an unprecedented $32 million to enhance the institution. Additionally, as chair and CEO of the

Lola Walker Dunahoe

Board of Trustees of the Mary R. Gallaspy Charitable Trust No. 2, she oversaw the distribution of more than $11 million in scholarships to over 3,000 NSU students as growth of the Trust progressed to a current value in excess of $43 million.

In 2015, Governor-elect John Bel Edwards appointed Dunahoe to his Higher Education Transition Committee. In 2016, she was appointed by Edwards to the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System, where she played a pivotal role in the selection of eight university presidents, including three at Northwestern. Her dedication to higher education earned her some of the university's highest honors, including the NSU Distinguished Alumna Service Award in 2021 and induction into the Long Purple Line in 2022, the most prestigious recognition for Northwestern alumni.

Beyond her contributions to education, Dunahoe served as a member and officer of several philanthropic, preservation and service organizations, including the Natchitoches Historic Foundation, the Association for the Preservation of Historic Natchitoches, St. Denis Garden Club and chapters AU and BK of the PEO Sisterhood. Her priority always centered on First Baptist Church, particularly its children and music ministries. In 2018, she co-chaired its $2.5 million restoration project.

As a member, president, and sustainer advisor of the Service League of Natchitoches she chaired the total restoration of the Prudhomme-Rouquier House, built in 1790, including solicitating and obtaining a $366,000 Save America's Treasures grant that funded the restoration, then the creation of the Prudhomme-Rouquier House Foundation, serving as its first president. One of the cornerstones of Mrs. Dunahoe's legacy will always be the St. Denis Art League, where she served for nearly 50 years as a director and then chair of its annual Spring Festival, which annually recognizes young ladies and gentlemen in their senior year of high school.

Of all her accomplishments, the greatest was her family. Dunahoe is survived by her husband of 53 years, Edwin Dunahoe; her daughter, Ashley Renee Dunahoe Reynolds and husband Jason; her sons, Jason Edwin Dunahoe and wife, Lexie; and Jared Ryan Dunahoe and his wife, Danielle, and nine grandchildren.

Reflecting on his mother's commitment to NSU, her son Jared said, "Other than her faith and her family there was nothing more important to my mom than NSU. She firmly believed in the importance of NSU to the lives of the people of our community. She devoted a large part of her life to improving NSU and our family hopes the establishment of this endowment will continue to advance her goal of improving NSU and, most importantly, the lives of its students. Our family will be forever grateful to all of the wonderful people she worked with at NSU, and we would especially like to thank President Genovese for providing us with this opportunity to honor our mother."

Edwin Dunahoe remarked, "Between the University and its Laboratory schools, Northwestern has contributed to every member of our family's education. Lola cared deeply about providing every child a quality educational opportunity. She dedicated a significant portion of her life working to ensure Northwestern was the best university in Louisiana. We hope the establishment of this endowment will help future generations of NSU students to achieve their goals and obtain a great education."

Through this endowment, Dunahoe's family ensures that her spirit of service and academic dedication will live on, inspiring generations of scholars at Northwestern.

For more information about giving opportunities at NSU, visit www.northwesternstatealumni.com/waystogive/.

Marcus Jones Scholarship will benefit first generation students

A scholarship honoring Dr. Marcus Jones has been established through the Northwestern State University Foundation to benefit first generation students. Jones was NSU president from 2021-2024 before returning to the University of Louisiana System office to serve as executive vice president and chief operating officer.

Baton Rouge businesswoman and NSU alumna Lela Mae Wilkes, a long-time supporter of the university, created with scholarship with a leading gift of $25,000 with the goal of reaching $100,000. Preference for the Dr. Marcus Jones First Generation Scholarship, a need-based award, will be given to first-generation students majoring in business, accounting or music education/performance from central Louisiana or international students. Friends are invited to contribute to the scholarship by visiting www.northwesternstatealumni.com/jones-scholarship/.

"The scholarship is to honor Dr. Jones and all he has accomplished," Wilkes said. "He came from a family of 19 and became the president of his alma mater, Northwestern State University, and now is the executive vice president and chief executive officer of the nine universities under the guidance of the University of Louisiana System. What an unbelievable accomplishment."

Jones was named NSU's 20th president and first Black president in November 2021 after serving as interim president beginning in July 2021. He served as executive vice president and chief operating officer for the University of Louisiana System from 2020-21, where he oversaw the areas of business finance, internal/external audit function, EEO and IT for the System and handled matters of system level importance on behalf of the UL System president. He also oversaw management of budgets, administration, policies and procedures and international relations and acted as the legal liaison for the System.

Jones served as NSU's executive vice president for University and Business Affairs from 2017-2020 and vice president for University Affairs from 2007-17, where he was a key administrator in the planning, operation and management of the University. Jones was also a member of Northwestern's faculty for 27 years as an instructor of business, assistant professor of business law and international business, associate professor of business law and international business and holder of the Ben D. Johnson Endowed Professorship.

At the UL System, Jones guides system strategic planning and supports enrollment across the system's nine institutions. He said he knows first-hand the importance of scholarships in assisting deserving students in getting a degree.

"I benefitted from scholarships in my own academic journey and I understand the challenges that first generation students and their families face," Jones said. "I am deeply grateful to Lela Mae for her incredible generosity and truly honored to have this scholarship bear my name."

Wilkes, a pioneer in the petrochemical service industry, is owner and chief executive officer of Brown Eagle, a Baton Rouge company with more than 500 employees that serves chemical companies and other businesses across the mid-South. She earned a business degree at NSU in 1968 and was a member of Purple Jackets, Associated Women Students, PI Omega Pi Business Honor Society and Alpha Sigma Alpha sorority. She earned many honors in her professional life and from NSU over the years and has supported through the university through scholarships, service and many other ways.

Marcus Jones is pictured with Lela Mae Wilkes prior to commencement exercises in May 2022.

"He came from a family of 19 and became the president of his alma mater, Northwestern State University, and now is the executive vice president and chief executive officer of the nine universities under the guidance of the University of Louisiana System. What an unbelievable accomplishment."

– Lela Mae Wilkes

College of Arts & Sciences announces scholarship for English majors

NSU's College of Arts and Sciences has created an endowed scholarship through the NSU Foundation to benefit students pursuing degrees in English.

The Advance English scholarship is available to full-time undergraduate students currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts in English program. Entering, returning and transfer students are invited to apply. Students who have previously been awarded this scholarship may apply and be awarded again. Recipients will be selected by committee recommendation and the discretion of the head of the Department of English, Languages and Cultural Studies.

"The College of Arts and Sciences is thrilled to have the opportunity to use this funding to establish a scholarship in the Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies," said Dr. Francene Lemoine, dean of the COAS. "It is always impactful when a student can receive a scholarship within their discipline. It can provide someone with the drive to complete their degree. We are excited to be able to provide that inspiration to ELCS majors."

Applications for the scholarship are open from the end of the spring semester in May until Aug. 1 and are based on financial need and academic merit. Applicants must provide a letter of application that includes an introduction, outline of academic success and proof of financial need, a resume of work, education and student life experiences, a writing sample and transcripts.

Supporters can contribute to the scholarship by visiting www.northwesternstatealumni.com/advance-scholarship/.

Initial funding for the scholarship became available through the reallocation of funds from the Advance Program for Young Scholars. Other Advance funds were distributed in areas associated with recruiting, current student activities, and summer camps.

Information on NSU's Department of English, Languages, and Cultural Studies is available at www.nsula.edu/english/.

Nominations are open for 2025 Long Purple Line

NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY
LONG PURPLE LINE

Nominations are open for Northwestern State University's Long Purple Line through May 5.

The Long Purple Line, NSU's Alumni Hall of Distinction, was established in 1990 to provide recognition and appreciation to individuals whose career accomplishments or service to their fellow man have enhanced the reputation and prestige of Northwestern State. Selection may be based upon past or continuing achievements in individuals' careers, exemplary and extraordinary service to community, state and nation or both career accomplishments and service to mankind including service to their alma mater.

Honorees will be recognized during a luncheon and induction program held in conjunction with Homecoming festivities this fall.

The link to the Long Purple Line nomination form is www.northwesternstatealumni.com/lpl/.

THE NSU FOUNDATION WOULD LIKE TO ANNOUNCE THE FOLLOWING NEWLY ESTABLISHED SCHOLARSHIPS.

College of Arts & Sciences Enhancement Fund
www.northwesternstatealumni.com/arts-sciences-fund/

Mike McConathy Scholarship
www.northwesternstatealumni.com/mcconathy-scholarship/

Doug Ireland Endowed Scholarship
www.northwesternstatealumni.com/ireland-scholarship/

Lee and Evie Posey Endowed Scholarship
www.northwesternstatealumni.com/posey-scholarship/

Family, friends, former players, coaches and supporters joined Coach Mike McConathy Feb. 15 as Northwestern State University named the basketball court in Prather Coliseum in his honor.

McConathy Court naming solidifies coach's legacy at Northwestern

Of all the accolades, triumphs and accomplishments, Coach Mike McConathy said he is most proud to have given young people the opportunity to get an education playing a game they love.

"Sometimes you don't see the real picture in sports because you look at the record, which says you didn't have a good year, but if every kid graduated and every kid went on to be successful…the fact that we gave them an opportunity to advance and tried to influence those young people had redeeming value," McConathy said.

Northwestern State University hosted a ceremony Feb. 15 to name the playing surface in Prather Coliseum the Mike McConathy Court, honoring the state's leader in college basketball coaching victories. The recognition took place during halftime of the Southland Conference men's basketball game against Stephen F. Austin. Family, friends, colleagues, former players and Demon fans filled the courtside to join the celebration.

The ceremony marked the launch of the Mike McConathy Scholarship Fund to support Northwestern student-athletes who have exhausted their NCAA eligibility before completing their degrees. Friends who wish to contribute can do so at www.nsu.la/mcconathy.

McConathy compiled 330 of his state-record victories while coaching 23 seasons at Northwestern, the alma mater of his father, two uncles, both of his sons and two of his nephews. He led Northwestern to its first three NCAA Tournament appearances, including the first two NCAA Tournament victories in school history. McConathy's teams won the first two Southland titles in program history, reaching four SLC Tournament title games and winning three of them. His players also excelled academically, with a graduation rate of about 90 percent. He retired from NSU in 2022.

Last year, NSU President James Genovese recalled McConathy to NSU to serve as an advisor for networking, recruiting and external support.

"The wins and losses are very important, the NCAA tournaments were great and winning against Iowa. Naturally they have to be the pinnacle, but when you take it a little bit deeper, you see the way that championship basketball at Northwestern impacted those young men's lives," McConathy said.

Away from the bench, McConathy's career, which included the starting and building of Bossier Parish Community College's program into a national tournament participant, landed him the Louisiana Association of Basketball Coaches Association's Mr. Basketball Award in 2023. He is a member of the N-Club Hall of Fame and Northwestern's Hall of Distinguished Educators.

The McConathy family's long history with NSU is also significant.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to extend the legacy of my family's name at Northwestern. My father and his brothers came from Bienville Parish and got degrees and master's degrees. Being able to continue that legacy is something special."

McConathy's Christian faith and servant-leader philosophy are as closely identified with him as his success as a coach.

"My parents taught me a lot, but the most important thing that they gave me was they exposed me to my faith in which Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of everything that I've always tried to do," he said. "It doesn't mean that I haven't failed many times, but I've always had to look to Him for guidance and direction in coaching, living, visiting with people and trying to emulate the things that He did for us."

McConathy had many to thank, starting with his wife of 47 years, Connie, their sons and their families, teammates, fellow coaches, players and all who supported the basketball program, including the pep band and spirit groups.

"God has been good to us. We've been able to exercise our faith. We've been able to encourage our young people to get degrees. We've encouraged them to have high character."

His gratitude extends to those who helped him on and off the court: the assistant coaches, graduate assistants, trainers, administrative staff and others who taught his players life lessons in their own ways. McConathy maintains close ties with those he's coached and worked with, attending weddings and appearing at ballgames to watch former students coach or their children play ball. Some pursued careers centered around athletics while others chose education, healthcare, law, medicine, business and other professions. Many were in attendance to support and congratulate the McConathys.

"When recruiting them, I told them that this is this was not about one to two or three or four years," McConathy said. "This was about a lifetime. That is part of the legacy that I would want for them, that when you come to Northwestern, this is your home and the community will care about you for the rest of your life, not just while you're playing."

Northwestern retires All-Star Baseball alum David Fry's jersey

Before he struck a walk-off home run with No. 6 on his back against the New York Yankees in the 2024 American League Championship Series, David Fry built four years' worth of memories wearing No. 1 at Northwestern State.

Those accomplishments, which included the go-ahead home run that lifted the Demons to the first Southland Conference Tournament championship in program history, were memorialized in January when Fry's No. 1 was retired at the Demons' annual Baseball auction.

A four-year letterman from Colleyville, Texas, Fry was an All-American in 2018 when he helped the Demons capture the first Southland tournament crown in program history and reach an NCAA Regional for the first time in 13 years.

His solo home run leading off the seventh inning of the SLC Tournament championship game broke a 5-all tie and sent the Demons to the Corvallis Regional.

It also capped a season in which Fry was the Southland Conference Player of the Year, the All-Louisiana Hitter of the Year, the Southland Conference Tournament MVP and Northwestern's first position player All-American in two decades.

A four-year starter who was named All-Southland Conference in each of his four seasons, Fry finished his career with school records in at-bats (851), doubles (74) and total bases (431) and shared the then-home run record of 31.

His 245 at-bats and 26 doubles in 2018 remain school single-season records while his 62 games played that season are tied for the most in school single-season history.

A seventh-round draft pick of the Milwaukee Brewers, Fry was traded to the Cleveland Guardians and made his major league debut May 1, 2023. During his first full season at the MLB level, Fry was named an All-Star – becoming the first former Demon baseball player to do so.

Fry singled home a run in his first All-Star Game at-bat. In his first postseason, Fry delivered a go-ahead home run in the seventh inning of Game 4 of the American League Divisional Series at Detroit and added a pivotal RBI squeeze bunt in the ninth to keep the Guardians' season alive.

Fry is married to the former Rebekah Burleson (2016), who worked in the Recruiting Office as well as the Office of Alumni and Development. The couple has a daughter, Evelyn.

David Fry spoke during his jersey number retirement ceremony Jan. 25.

Unveiling Fry's retired jersey were, from left, former NSU head baseball coach Lane Burroughs, current Head Baseball Coach Chris Bertrand, former head coach Bobby Barbier, NSU President James Genovese, Rebekah Burleson Fry and David Fry.

Meet the Office of Alumni and Development Team

Jill Bankston, CFRE
Director of Alumni and Development
bankstonj@nsula.edu
(318) 357-4241

To establish an endowment, add to your scholarship, establish a planned gift, or make a gift, please contact Cristy Bernard or Jill Bankston.

Cristy Bernard
Associate Director of Development
bernardc@nsula.edu
(318) 357-4292

Jared Boydstun
Donor Research & Database Specialist
boydstunj@nsula.edu
(318) 357-4360

To change, add, or modify your contact information, please contact Jared Boydstun.

Kayla Dunagan
Assistant Director of Scholarships
dunagank@nsula.edu
(318) 357-5639

To learn more about the scholarship awarding process and scholarship recipients, please contact Kayla Dunagan.

Sharon Leone
Development Office Coordinator
leones@nsula.edu
(318) 357-5699

To lead you in the right direction, please contact Sharon Leone.

Courtney Thompson
Assistant Director of Donor Relations
thompsonc@nsula.edu
(318) 357-4430

To modify your criteria, schedule donations, or to create a Scholarship Link please contact Courtney Thompson.

Terry Wilson
Assistant Director of Alumni Affairs
wilsont@nsula.edu
(318) 357-6348

To discuss alumni affairs, events, or reunions, please contact Terry Wilson.

In Memory

1943 – Corinne Mondello Dowden, March 14, 2025, Kisatchie

1956 – JoAnn "Jody" Tarver Dew, Jan. 26, 2025, Natchitoches

1958 – Gwendolyn Bridges Axtel, Nov. 27, 2024, Sulphur

1960 – James Lamar Thomasee, Sept. 24, 2024, Pineville

1961 – John Andrew Wanat, Feb. 5, 2025, Ringgold, Georgia

1961, 1973, 1980 – Janell Anthony Hunter, Feb. 23, 2025, Martin

1965 – Steve Blount, Dec. 23, 2024, Prairieville

1965 – Charles Edward Horton, Feb. 21, 2025, Benton

1966 – Joyce Wales Burkeen, Dec. 18, 2024, Baton Rouge

1967 – Edwina M. Lewis, Dec. 13, 2024, Natchitoches

1973, 1974 – Dale Hobson, Dec. 20, 2024, Quitman

1974 – Robert J. Brotherton, Jan. 13, 2025, Haughton

1975 – Clarke Van Sickle, Dec. 22, 2024, Natchitoches

1975 – Randy Price, Feb. 25, 2025, Natchitoches

1976 – Patsy Lou Johnson, March 9, 2025, Natchitoches

1977 – Robert Thomas Stringfield, Nov. 25, 2024, Longview, Texas

1977 – Don Starling Bernard, Feb. 4, 2025, Benton

1980 – Terolyn Denise Harris, Dec. 3, 2024, Natchitoches

1980 – Grady Cook, March 7, 2025, Natchitoches

1981 – Jack Beck, April 18, 2024, Lakeland, Florida

1982 – George Scott, July 22, 2022, Houston

2002 – Wesley Matthew Jones, Feb. 22, 2025, Natchitoches

2008 – James Clyde Donaho, Dec. 21, 2024, Natchitoches

2011 – Roxanne Bernadette Fortenberry, Dec. 15, 2024, Bogalusa

Juanita Anne Barberousse Henry, Dec. 9, 2024, Natchitoches

Walter Arthur Wagner, Nov. 9. 2024, Buckhannon, West Virginia

Nancy Gale Monk, Dec. 22, 2024, Bernice

Leon Robinson Satterthwaite, Jan. 4, 2025, Marksville

Jettye Lou Thomas Kemp, Jan. 16, 2025, Montgomery

Dr. Bill Shaw, Feb. 7, 2025, Billings, Montana
Dr. Shaw taught at NSU for 32 years and was head of the Department of Industrial Technology. He retired in 1997 and was named Professor Emeritus.

Guess Who

Northwestern State University honored a special Natchitoches Parish resident with an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts during 1985 spring commencement exercises. The cause for the honorary degree had been championed by two active members of the faculty who were instrumental in the granting of the doctorate. ***Can you name them?***

If so, email jacksonl@nsula.edu with your name, year of graduation and city of residence.

From the Winter 2025 edition: Winter Ball Court Queen Paula Jones was pictured with the previous year's queen Linda Fulgham pictured in the 1975 Potpourri.

Those who guessed correctly are as follows:

Debbie Hebert (1975, 1977), Claremont, California

Susan Stanley (1975), Pollock

Vikki Young Hale (1976), The Woodlands, Texas

Richard D Ross (1975), ΣΤΓ, Leesville

Paula Jones Tripp (1976), Stillwater, Oklahoma
Paula writes, *"Yes, I can name both of those ladies – one of them is me! I was the 1975 Winter Ball Queen and am pictured with Linda Fulgham. It was a wonderful, beautiful, memorable night!"*

Sally Tanner Namie (1976), Covington
Sally writes, "I was on the court that year."

Kim Gaspard (1977), Haughton

Peggy Vidrine Brown (1975, 1977), Lake Charles

Looking Back

Tuesday, April 22, 1975 CURRENT SAUCE Page 7

Lady Demons sign first athletic scholarships

Female student athletes sat behind a table in the Men's Gym reading a contract that, when signed it, became a dream come true. Under the provisions of Title IX, each would receive one half of an athletic scholarship. Ten returning women athletes and two incoming students representing four sports were the first to be presented with athletic scholarships. Pictured are Diane Pittman, Pat Nolen, Emma Ellerman, "Do" Bonin, Sherrill Landry, Mona Davidson, Terri McConnell, Inez Brew (first African American recipient), Janie Wallace and Margaret Langford. Not pictured are incoming high school students Lisa Brewer and Tammy Primeaux.

Northwestern State University
Alumni Columns
Natchitoches, LA 71497-0002

Non-Profit Organization
U. S. Postage Paid
Permit 204
Natchitoches, LA 71457

northwesternstatealumni.com

SAVE *the* DATE

NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY

75th Anniversary - College of Nursing
55th Anniversary - School of Allied Health

Receptions

SHREVEPORT CAMPUS
Thursday, May 1, 2025 from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m.

CENLA CAMPUS
Thursday, May 8, 2025 from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m.

COLLEGE OF NURSING
NSU
SCHOOL OF ALLIED HEALTH